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MR. CHAIRMAN

CORE LIST

FCS INFORMATION 6
FARMER COOPERATIVE SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ALL OF A SUDDEN YOU ARE CHAIRMAN

Whether election as chairman is anticipated or suddenly occurs, the inherent responsibilities and opportunities for leadership in this office are great. Assuming this role of leadership responsibility includes conducting many meetings.

Farmer cooperative meetings—board of directors, committees, and annual membership—must proceed on a businesslike basis and follow general rules of conduct. The chairman must keep the meeting moving in an orderly fashion, protecting individual participant rights, while enabling the majority to reach decisions without undue delay. This includes knowing how to get the meeting started and—equally important—how and when to stop.

This publication is designed to provide the chairman guidelines for conducting meetings. It also provides cooperative directors and members in larger meetings some general guidelines on how they can present their ideas under democratic rules established and accepted as standard meeting procedure.

This material has been compiled from many sources, with special acknowledgment to an earlier publication of the same title by Irwin W. Rust. It is presented here as highlights of Robert's "Rules of Order" of particular importance to cooperative business meetings.

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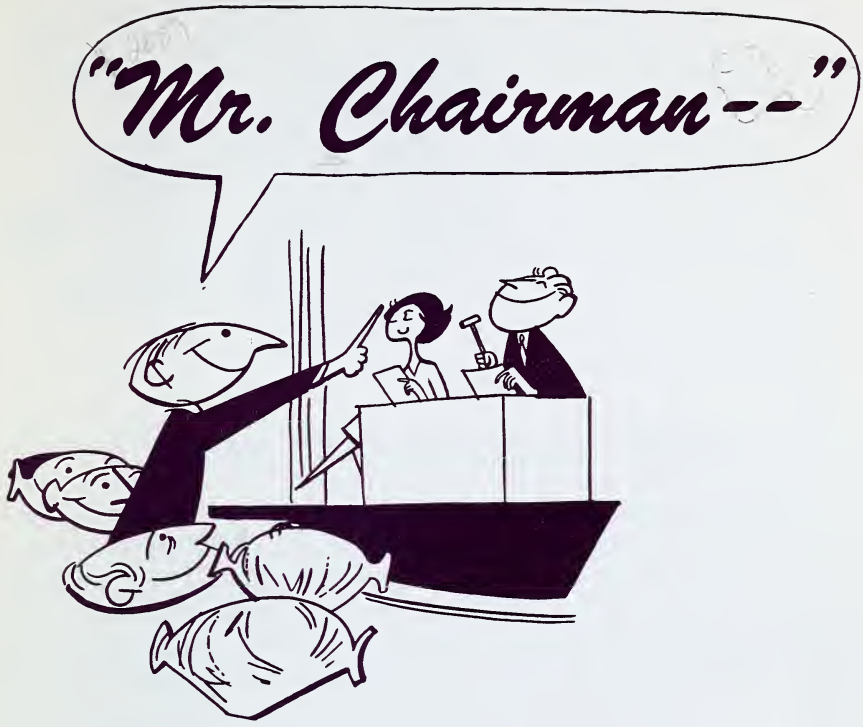

C. H. Kirkman, Jr.
Cooperative Education Specialist
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Chairmen and members in cooperatives need some understanding of why certain procedures are followed before the call is made, "The meeting will come to order." This understanding is based on parliamentary law developed from democratic procedures.

Accurate knowledge and application of parliamentary procedure provide the chairman the basis for conducting well organized, effective cooperative meetings. It is the responsibility of the chairman to apply rules of order democratically so matters of major concern reflect the considered judgment of the voting majority. Failure to observe the rules leads to misunderstanding, inefficiency, dissension, chaos, and loss of individual rights associated with democracy in cooperatives.

WHY PARLIAMENTARY LAW

Parliamentary law, like other laws governing social behavior, is designed to assure smoothly and fairly conducted meetings. It is expressed as rules of order for conducting meetings that have developed from years of experience with majority rule in democratic organization. Parliamentary law is thus designed to assist in determining majority wishes and assuring those wishes are executed.

Sections of cooperative bylaws may be established for holding meetings, and stating voting rules, rights, and duties of members. For example, bylaws may call for more than a majority vote on issues. While such provisions may protect the minority in vital issues, the provisions make it possible for the minority to hinder concerns of the majority.

Persons joining democratic organizations as members are aware that the majority rules, and in joining the group they agree to adhere to majority vote. Minority members in an organization have the right to enter discussions and oppose actions proposed by the majority. The chairman must be familiar with bylaw sections and be willing to impartially apply them; otherwise, actions taken at a meeting may not endure legal investigation.

All members attain equal rights, privileges, and obligations when joining the organization. Members may make motions, ask questions in meetings, and nominate directors. Reciprocally, all members must respect the rights of other members. They must

obtain pertinent information to participate in discussion and express themselves through voting. They have the privilege of requesting full discussion of issues involving group decisions and to enter into these discussions when recognized by the chair. Members present must know what is being discussed.

The chairman has the responsibility of informing members of the motion being discussed and how it affects the organization. The chair is responsible for making application of parliamentary law to procedural motions relating to the main motion.

Moderators of meetings must use common sense. The chairman must be fairminded, not a dictator. Confusion can be avoided by deciding who is to have the floor and not letting more than one person talk at a time. The moderator should insist that members be brief and talk to the point. When possible, microphones should be used so the entire audience can hear speakers. Otherwise, the chair should repeat the gist of speakers' thoughts.

Decisions on important matters should be made only after facts are known and fairly presented. Concerns of importance can be explored by a committee in advance of the meeting so facts can be presented and intelligent action taken.

The moderator's prime concern is conducting the meeting, carefully observing parliamentary procedure. Strict impartiality must be observed when engaging in general discussions. If the chairman wishes to engage in debate on an issue, the vice chairman should be called to the chair and the presentation made from the floor.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Order of business is the term applied to the program for a meeting. This consists of a list of matters arranged in the order to be considered and acted on. It is often called an agenda for the meeting. The order of business is designed to aid conduct of affairs of the group. It should be prepared in advance by the chairman, consulting with the manager and secretary.

Some organizations have bylaws calling for a definite sequence of business, including members' meetings. This order can be changed by a motion to suspend the rules. Organizations not so formally organized can change the order of business by unanimous consent. If changing the usual order of business will improve meeting procedures, this should be done. Additional matters may be brought up at the meeting, except matters that, according to the bylaws, require advance notice.

A suggested order of business follows:

—Call to order. The presiding officer calls the meeting to order by announcing: "Will the meeting please come to order."

—Invocation or prayer. If an invocation or prayer is planned, the chairman should ask the desired person prior to the meeting.

—Roll call. The chairman may request the secretary to call the roll. A roll call is not mandatory, but may be desirable or requested by members to assure presence of a quorum as stipulated in the bylaws. Lacking any written provision, parliamentary law holds that a majority of the members constitutes a quorum. Meetings where a quorum is not present should not be called to order except to vote to adjourn to another meeting time.

—Minutes of the previous meeting. The presiding officer calls on the secretary to read minutes of the previous meeting. Reading of minutes previously delivered to members may be suspended by a motion to this effect. Regardless of procedure, corrections or additions should be requested, after which the chair declares the minutes approved as read, delivered, or corrected, or entertains a motion to that effect.

—Reports. The chairman calls for committee reports.

—Old business. The chairman declares, "Unfinished business is now in order." The presiding officer must have a record of old business—motions from previous meetings and other matters established for this meeting agenda.

—New business. The chairman requests new business, say-

ing, "New business is in order." Members or the chairman may present concerns calling for action. Action is taken by a member making a motion on the matters suggested.

—Announcements and communications. Members are given first opportunity for announcements, followed by the chairman. Correspondence from other organizations may be read by the secretary.

—Adjournment. When the presiding officer has determined there is no further business to come before the meeting, or no more time is available, a motion to adjourn is needed. Motions to adjourn are discussed under privileged motions.

TRANSACTING BUSINESS

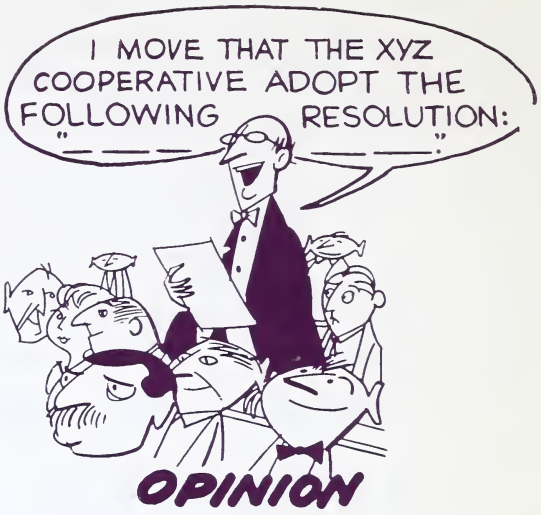
Making motions, discussing them, and reaching decisions on any matter by voting are important parts of business meetings. The "how-to" is important to assure standard meeting procedure prevails.

Motions

Motions are the means used to bring proposals before a business meeting. Motions are of two basic kinds: (1) calling for action—"I move XYZ Cooperative have a feasibility study prepared on vegetable processing facility needs." and (2) recording expressions of sentiment or opinion—"I move adoption of the following resolution: Resolved: That XYZ Cooperative is in favor of promoting Co-op Month."

Presenting Motions

A member wishing to make a motion raises a hand or stands and addresses the presiding officer, using the official title or saying "Mr. Chairman." When the chairman recognizes a member, the member begins his motion: "I move that...," stating the proposal as clearly and simply as possible. The chairman may rule a motion temporarily out of order if it does not conform to the order of business. For motions in order, the presiding officer calls for a second to the motion unless it has been seconded, saying "Is there a second to the motion?" The chair recognizes the first member indicating a wish to do so. This member says, "I second the motion." If no member is willing to second the motion, the chairman states, "The motion is dropped for want of a second," and moves to the next order of business.



After the seconding of the motion to ascertain that everyone heard it and that it is recorded correctly in the minutes, the chairman restates the motion, "It has been moved and seconded that . . . . . Is there any discussion?" Adequate time for discussion should be allowed before voting.

Classes of Motions Have Voting Order

Four classes of motions are used in meetings, and they must be voted on in a definite order of preference.

Main Motions

Main motions are those formally stating and bringing business before a meeting with intent of getting something done. "I move XYZ Cooperative have a feasibility study prepared on vegetable processing facility needs" is an example of a main motion. Main motions are voted on last in order of precedence.

Subsidiary Motions

Subsidiary or secondary motions amend or in some way alter the disposition of the main motion on the floor. An example of a subsidiary motion is, "I move to insert the words 'and storage' after the word 'processing,'" or "I move the feasibility study on vegetable processing facility be referred to the long-range planning committee." Obviously, either of these motions, when sec-

onded, must be opened for discussion and voted on before the main motion to which they apply is again considered. The chair, when calling for the vote on a "motion to amend," must make it clear that the vote will not yet be on the main motion, but only on whether members want the wording of the main motion changed before voting on it.

Incidental Motions

Incidental motions must be acted on before subsidiary or main motions, in order of precedence, and usually involve such matters as rules of order and the rights of members. For example, if the presiding officer entertains an amendment before a previous amendment has been acted on, a member may rise and say, "I rise to a point of order. There is already one amendment pending." The chair would agree and rule the second amendment out of order.

Privileged Motions

Privileged motions have the highest priority, and must be acted on ahead of any other motions that may be pending. The three privileged motions in the order of their priority are (1) to adjourn, (2) to recess, and (3) personal privilege.

The motion to adjourn takes precedence over all other motions, requires a second, is not debatable, must have a majority

TABLE OF MOTIONS

Class of motion	Type of motion	Second required	Debatable	Amendable	In order if question pending
Main	Principal or original	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Subsidiary	Amend	Yes	Yes, if motion debatable	Yes	Yes
	Amend an amendment	Yes	Yes, if motion debatable	No	Yes
	Extend or limit debate	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Postpone definitely	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
	Call for previous question	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Refer or commit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Lay on table	Yes	No	No	Yes
Incidental	Appealing decision of chair	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Call for a division	No	No	No	Yes
	Divide the question	Yes, if subject related	No	Yes	Yes
	Nominate	No	Yes eligibility	NA	No
	Close nomination	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Reopen nominations	Yes	No	Yes	No
	Object to consideration of question	No	No	No	Yes

Interrupt speaker	Vote required	Tabled	Reconsidered	Purpose
No	Majority	Yes	Yes	Introduce new business
No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Alter or modify motion
No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Alter or modify amendment
No	2/3	(1)	Yes	Adjust length of time of discussion
No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Delay action
No	Majority	(1)	No	Kill a motion without bringing it to to a vote
No	2/3	(1)	Yes	Close debate immediately and vote
No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Place business in hands of a committee
No	Majority	No	No	Set aside item of business temporarily
Yes	Majority	Yes, but motion goes also	Yes	Ensure majority agrees with ruling of chair
Yes	None	No	No	Secure a counted vote
No	Majority	No	No	Consider parts separately
No	NA	NA	NA	Place in nomination
No	2/3	No	No	Limit number of nominees
No	Majority	No	Only negative vote	Add to list of nominees
Yes	2/3 neg.	No	No	Prevent consideration

TABLE OF MOTIONS

Class of motion	Type of motion	Second required	Debatable	Amendable	In order if question pending	Interrupt speaker	Vote required	Tabled	Reconsidered	Purpose
Main	Principal or original	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority	Yes	Yes	Introduce new business
Subsidiary	Amend	Yes	Yes, if motion debatable	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Alter or modify motion
	Amend an amendment	Yes	Yes, if motion debatable	No	Yes	No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Alter or modify amendment
	Extend or limit debate	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	2/3	(1)	Yes	Adjust length of time of discussion
	Postpone definitely	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Delay action
	Postpone indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Majority	(1)	No	Kill a motion without bringing it to to a vote
	Call for previous question	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	2/3	(1)	Yes	Close debate immediately and vote
	Refer or commit	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	(1)	Yes	Place business in hands of a committee
	Lay on table	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Majority	No	No	Set aside item of business temporarily
Incidental	Appealing decision of chair	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes, but motion goes also	Yes	Ensure majority agrees with ruling of chair
	Call for a division	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	None	No	No	Secure a counted vote
	Divide the question	Yes, if subject related	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No	No	Consider parts separately
	Nominate	No	Yes eligibility	NA	No	No	NA	NA	NA	Place in nomination
	Close nomination	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No	No	Limit number of nominees
	Reopen nominations	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	Only negative vote	Add to list of nominees
	Object to consideration of question	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	2/3 neg.	No	No	Prevent consideration

Class of motion	Type of motion	Second required	Debatable	Amendable	In order if question pending
	Rise to point of order	No	No	No	Yes
	Make a request	No	No	No	Yes
	Suspend the rules	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Method of voting	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	Withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Yes
Privilege	Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Yes
	Take a recess	Yes	No	Yes, the length of time	Yes
	Raise question of privilege	No	No	No	Yes
	Fix time to adjourn	Yes	Limited	Yes, to change time and place	Yes
	Call for orders of the day	No	No	No	Yes
Unclassified	Reconsider	Yes	Yes, if motion reconsidered debatable	No	Yes
	Rescind	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
	Ratify or censure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Take from table	Yes	No	No	No

[1] Only with motion to which it applies.
NA—not applicable

Interrupt speaker	Vote required	Tabled	Reconsidered	Purpose
Yes	None	No	No	Enforce the rules
Yes	Decide without	No	No	Secure information
No	2/3	Yes	No	Facilitate business against organi-ation rule
No	Majority	No	No	Determine voting procedure
No	None	No	No	Withdraw a motion before it is voted on
No	Majority	No	No	End of meeting
No	Majority	No	No	Provide inter-mission
Yes	Decide without	No	No	Obtain immediate action in emergency
No	Majority	No	No	Set time for next meeting
Yes	Without or 2/3 negative	No	No	Determine order, special orders, or abide by order
Yes, if time is factor	Majority	Yes	No	Secure new vote on motion previously voted
No	Majority, but 2/3 if no advance notice given	Yes	Affirmative vote not reconsiderable	Void previous action of organization
No	Majority	Yes	Yes	Approve or disapprove all or part of an action (committee report, etc.)
No	Majority	No	No	Bring before group motion previously tabled.

Class of motion	Type of motion	Second required	Debatable	Amendable	In order if question pending	Interrupt speaker	Vote required	Tabled	Reconsidered	Purpose
	Rise to point of order	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	None	No	No	Enforce the rules
	Make a request	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Decide without	No	No	Secure information
	Suspend the rules	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	2/3	Yes	No	Facilitate business against organi-ation rule
	Method of voting	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	No	No	Determine voting procedure
	Withdraw a motion	No	No	No	Yes	No	None	No	No	Withdraw a motion before it is voted on
Privilege	Adjourn	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Majority	No	No	End of meeting
	Take a recess	Yes	No	Yes, the length of time	Yes	No	Majority	No	No	Provide inter-mission
	Raise question of privilege	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Decide without	No	No	Obtain immediate action in emergency
	Fix time to adjourn	Yes	Limited	Yes, to change time and place	Yes	No	Majority	No	No	Set time for next meeting
	Call for orders of the day	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Without or 2/3 negative	No	No	Determine order, special orders, or abide by order
Unclassified	Reconsider	Yes	Yes, if motion reconsidered debatable	No	Yes	Yes, if time is factor	Majority	Yes	No	Secure new vote on motion previously voted
	Rescind	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Majority, but 2/3 if no advance notice given	Yes	Affirmative vote not reconsiderable	Void previous action of organization
	Ratify or censure	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes	Yes	Approve or disapprove all or part of an action (committee report, etc.)
	Take from table	Yes	No	No	No	No	Majority	No	No	Bring before group motion previously tabled.

[1] Only with motion to which it applies.
NA=not applicable.

vote, and must be put to a vote immediately after it has been made and seconded. If the motion to adjourn carries, the presiding officer must declare the meeting adjourned. The meeting is not officially adjourned, however, until the announcement is actually made by the presiding officer. A motion to recess follows the same process as the motion to adjourn.

Members seeking personal privilege may interrupt the speaker by saying, "Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of personal privilege. The light on the stage is shining in our eyes and we are unable to see the charts." It is the duty of the presiding officer to attend to the matter at once, because it involves the immediate comfort or right of a member.

Some Specific Considerations

As a general rule, when a member is recognized by the chair and given the floor, he has the right to speak without interruption. There are a few instances, however, where a speaker may be interrupted by another member wishing to make a motion subject to time limit or requiring immediate attention. Exceptions to this rule are: a motion to reconsider a vote by a member voting with the winning side because this must be done at the same meeting the vote was taken; a motion requiring immediate attention, such as a personal privilege question of light shining in the members' eyes; and a request for information, point of order, or parliamentary law, such as the rules on appealing the decision of the presiding officer.

Most motions are subject to discussion and debate before voting on them. Exceptions are motions dealing with procedure. Rules of order and parliamentary law carefully outline procedure for voting, thus eliminating necessity of discussion. Examples are limiting or extending debate, lay on or take from the table, to withdraw a motion, adjourn, recess, method of voting, previous question, request for information, division of questions if the subjects in the motion have no relation to one another.

Motions can be amended by varying their form or wording without distorting the central thought. For example "I move XYZ Cooperative have a feasibility study prepared on vegetable processing facility needs" can have the words "and storage" inserted after processing because the processed vegetables obviously need storage facilities while awaiting movement to market channels. It would not be permissible to amend this motion to include something unrelated to the vegetable processing facility. The original

motion should be resolved by voting and then introducing a new motion covering alternative or additional concerns.

Members Need to Participate

One of the most important rules of parliamentary law is that every member of an organization has the right to participate in any discussion of business matters at meetings. This does not mean every member must speak, but members desiring to enter the debate on a motion must have an opportunity to be heard.

Debatable motions include main motions, motions to amend debatable motions, postpone definitely or indefinitely, and rescind. Debate on a few others, such as a motion to refer a main motion to a committee, is limited to matters like powers and personnel of a committee, and may not involve merits of the main motion.

The presiding officer must exercise care to observe certain rules for debate that ensure an intelligent and orderly discussion. Members wishing to discuss a motion rise when the previous speaker completes his remarks and yields the floor. The member wishing to speak addresses the chair, saying, "Mr. Chairman," and waits to be recognized. As with the original motion, the chair recognizes a member, making it clear which person is designated to speak by calling him by name or location. A member recognized should state his name in large audiences if the chair does not name him.

Where several members simultaneously want to be recognized, the order of preference for recognition may be as follows: The member who explains a proposal should have the first opportunity to offer a motion. The member who has not engaged in the discussion should be recognized ahead of one who has spoken. The member who rarely speaks should be recognized before members constantly on their feet. The member who is opposed to a proposition should be given an opportunity to follow one who is in favor of the proposition.

Rules of Debate

Each recognized member may speak as long as he desires and as long as he conforms to the rules of debate.

These rules of debate are:

—Member's remarks must pertain to the question being debated. If the member wanders off the subject, the chair must request remarks be confined to the pending question.

—Member's remarks must be impersonal. The motion being considered, not the member proposing it, is the subject for debate.

—Member's remarks must be orderly and courteous. Rude language is sufficient cause for the chair to refuse the offending member the right to speak.

—The chair must assure that the member speaking is heard by insisting members listen and not permit irrelevant discussion.

—When all members wishing to speak have spoken, the chair brings the question to vote by saying, "Is there further discussion?" and then calls for the vote. If the discussion drags too long or no new facts or opinions seem to surface by further discussion, any member may move to close debate and vote on the question. This request, if properly seconded, is not debatable and the chair must at once call the vote on whether the discussion continues. Without such a motion, a member wishing to discuss the question, even after part of the vote is taken, has this right. Should such an event occur, the complete vote must be retaken.

Voting Procedure

Voting is a way of implementing a fundamental principle of parliamentary law that the will of the majority rules in a democratic organization. While there are a number of different concepts of what constitutes a majority, the will of the members is expressed by vote.

Most organizations operate with a set of bylaws that specify the requirements for a quorum. It is a good idea for the bylaws to define the words "majority" and "quorum," as applied to the organization. In the absence of specific definitions, more than 50 percent of the members of an organization constitute a quorum, and more than 50 percent of a quorum constitutes the majority required to take action binding on the organization.

For certain important decisions, such as amending the bylaws, many organization bylaws require a majority vote greater than a simple majority, such as 75 percent of the members present.

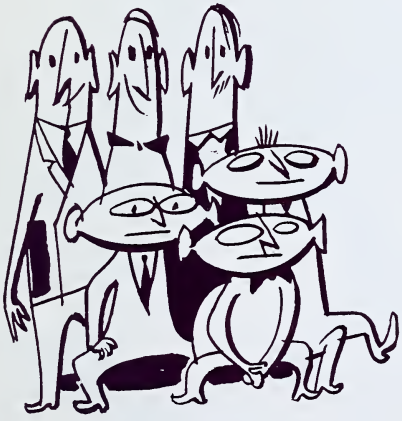
Some motions require a two-thirds majority vote for action. Examples of these motions are: to close further discussion of motion under consideration and vote; to close the nominations and vote on those nominated; and to rescind an action from a previous meeting if no advance notice is given.

In case of a tie vote, the presiding officer may cast the

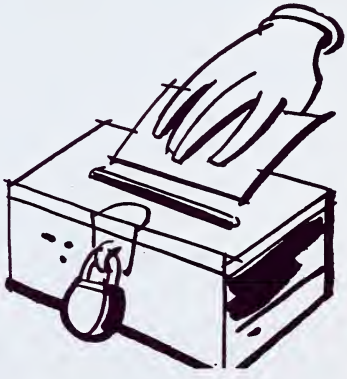
FOUR METHODS OF VOTING

Voice vote

show of hands



rising vote



and ballot

deciding vote; otherwise the motion is lost.

When more than two alternatives exist or more than two candidates are nominated, it is possible to have a plurality but not a majority vote on one of the issues or candidates. A plurality vote, a total vote greater than any one of the others received but not greater than the total of the others, is not sufficient to pass a motion or elect a candidate unless the organization bylaws permit it. Without this bylaw provision, members must be provided opportunity to vote on the two alternatives or candidates receiving the largest number of votes.

The most common means of voting is by voice. Before the chair puts the motion, it should be repeated or read so it is clear to everyone. The affirmative vote is called first saying "All those in favor of this motion please say 'aye' or 'yes.'" Then the chair asks: "All those opposed to this motion, say 'nay' or 'no.'" The chair decides the outcome of the voice vote and announces either "The motion is carried" or "The motion is lost."

If the voice vote is uncertain, the chair may call for a show of hands or for a rising vote—saying "Will all those in favor of the motion please rise." The secretary and other officers count the number voting for and against.

In board, committee, or other small group meetings, voting may be by roll call for permanent reference. Here the secretary calls the roll and records the "yes" or "no" vote of each.

In certain cases, such as election or removal of directors or officers, the bylaws usually provide the voting must be done by ballot to keep voting secret. Any member may also request a vote by ballot (or other means) even if the bylaws do not require it. If this motion is seconded, the chair must without debate let the members decide by voice or show of hands whether they prefer to vote by ballot on the matter.

Members may change their vote until the chair announces the vote, regardless of voting method used.

The presiding officer always announces the results when voting is completed. For voice vote, the announcement is, "The 'ayes' (or 'nays') have it. The motion is carried (or lost)." Any member questioning the voice vote may call for a division of the assembly (a count of affirmative and negative votes) to accurately determine member votes.

When voting is by ballot or roll call the chair must announce the number of votes, "The vote is: for—25, against—20;

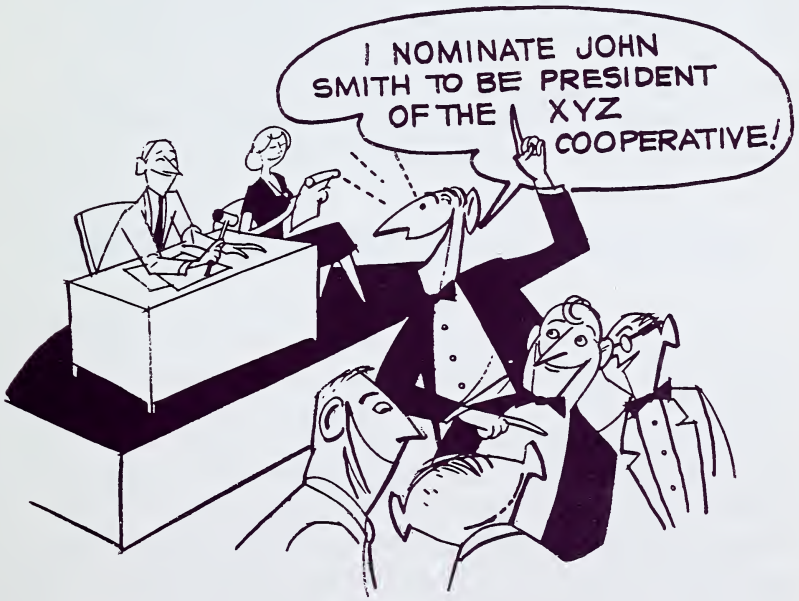
the motion is carried." The affirmative vote comes first in taking the vote and announcing results.

Nominating Candidates

Nominations of candidates for committees or offices may be by report of a nominating committee or any member present at a meeting where nominations are in order. Using a nominating committee offers some advantages. Prospective candidates can be interviewed to determine their willingness to serve if elected. Nominee qualifications can be checked. When wide areas or diverse groups are served, the nominating committee method offers greater possibility to spread representation evenly among various areas or groups. Bylaws may indicate these areas or groups to be represented.

The chairman opens nominations at a meeting, saying at the designated time, "Nominations for the office of *(name of office)* are now in order." If there is a nominating committee, the chair calls for the committee report. The report of the nominating committee enters nominations of those persons named in the report for the various offices to be filled.

The chairman then asks for further nominations for each



office from the floor (members assembled) and adds those names to names presented by the nominating committee. Whether there is a nominating committee or all nominations come from the floor, member procedure for making nominations is the same. Members wishing to make a nomination rise. When recognized by the chair each says, "I nominate Mr. or Ms. X for *(name of office)*. Nominations do not require a second. As nominations are made, the chair should repeat each name so everyone present knows who is nominated. The secretary should read nominees' names.

When the chair feels no more nominations will be made for an office the request is, "Are there any other nominations for the office of *(name of office)*?" If there are none, the chair opens the nominations for successive offices until there are nominees for all positions to be filled.

When voting by ballot, members may write in names of any member eligible in lieu of voting for nominated candidates. A simple majority of all votes cast is necessary to elect a nominee to office unless otherwise provided in the bylaws. If there are several candidates for one office, a simple majority may be lacking. One solution is to remove the candidate with the smallest number of votes from the race with each successive ballot.

New officers take office as soon as elected, if they are present at the meeting and agree to accept or if prior agreement has been obtained, unless bylaws state otherwise. For new officers not present, the election becomes effective on notification and there is no refusal to serve.

A summary of this discussion on motions is included as a Table of Motions at the end of this report.

MINUTES ARE THE OFFICIAL RECORD

The secretary keeps the meeting minutes, which are discussed earlier in the order of business. This is the official record of what took place at the meeting—list of things done, business introduced, committee reports submitted, motions made, voting on motions, nominations during elections, results of the election vote, and many other meeting concerns. The minutes should include names and figures for roll call or vote counts. The opening statement in meeting minutes should include name of the organization, type of meeting (annual, board, regular, adjournment, call), time, place, date, and name of chairman. Better

records are maintained by stating that a report was made and then saying a copy of the report is on file with the secretary for complete details rather than attempting to report summaries. Large organizations may wish to have their attorney review the wording about any action that may be subject to litigation at a later time.

Accurate notes made at the meeting vastly improve final minutes written after the meeting is over. When completed, minutes are signed by the secretary and filed in the special minutes book. These minutes, kept in the secretary's possession, are subject to inspection by any member wishing to see them.

CHAIRMAN HOLDS IMPORTANT KEY TO MEETING SUCCESS

The chairman holds an important key to making a meeting a success, whether it be committee, board of directors, or a meeting of all members. The presiding officer is responsible for making sure all members present have a chance to speak, to feel they have a part in the meeting and, meanwhile, transact the business necessary at the meeting.

The chairman must:

—Avoid hasty action

—Be courteous

—Be tactful

—Grasp and follow parliamentary procedure

—Guide the meeting without coercing members

—Know all about the business organization

—Be fair, impartial, and impersonal

—Talk loud enough

—Talk to the point

—Use common sense

The chairman cannot delegate these duties to others:

—Call the meeting to order

—Dispose of the business at hand

—Explain the effect of the motion where uncertainty exists

—Keep any discussion focused on the problems at hand

—Encourage a discussion of the pros and cons of an issue

—Recognize members who wish to speak

—See all motions are restated to be sure all hear and understand

—Understand parliamentary law to keep the meeting functioning and in accordance with that law.

—Close the meeting

The chairman who can do all these things certainly holds the gavel to make meetings interesting, democratic, and fruitful.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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FARMER COOPERATIVE SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Farmer Cooperative Service provides research, management, and educational assistance to cooperatives to strengthen the economic position of farmers and other rural residents. It works directly with cooperative leaders and Federal and State agencies to improve organization, leadership, and operation of cooperatives and to give guidance to further development.

The Service (1) helps farmers and other rural residents obtain supplies and services at lower cost and to get better prices for products they sell; (2) advises rural residents on developing existing resources through cooperative action to enhance rural living; (3) helps cooperatives improve services and operating efficiency; (4) informs members, directors, employees, and the public on how cooperatives work and benefit their members and their communities; and (5) encourages international cooperative programs.

The Service publishes research and educational materials and issues *Farmer Cooperatives*. All programs and activities are conducted on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.